

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

BUILDING A MIDDLE EASTERN ALLIANCE

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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12 February 2015

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Biography

LtCol. Dror Altman is assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. Graduated from IDC Herzliya in 2009 with a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science and Business Management. Graduated from "PUM" (the Israeli ACSC version) in 2010. Commanded an AS565 Panther, Maritime helicopter squadron (2010-2012) and an apache longbow squadron (2012-2014).



Abstract

This paper examines the US global position in a rapidly changing world. In particular it addresses the situation in the modern Middle East (to include countries of the Persian Gulf, the eastern Mediterranean countries, and North Africa ([Appendix A](#))¹) and proposes a new approach, forming a “Middle Eastern Treaty Organization” (METO). The paper examines both US and regional countries interests; evaluate advantages and disadvantages of having a “NATO like” alliance.



Introduction

Declarations of an imminent decline of the US as a super power are frequently in the headlines. The war on terror, the battle over Iraq and Afghanistan, and battles against non-state actors such as al-Qaida and ISIS, have made US appear to be war-exhausted. The US military is spread worldwide with deployments in South Korea, Germany, Japan, the Gulf peninsula and elsewhere. Political instabilities and crises, such as Russia challenging the international order over Crimea, China's growing engagement in the Pacific islands and Iran repeatedly avoiding nuclear resolution have damaged the US's political-diplomatic status in the world. China's rising economic strength together with Brazil, Russia and India, is changing the status-quo. But is the US really declining? Is it only a natural economic-power balancing? Answers vary as to the degree, but there is unquestionably a change. In addition, the US financial deficit brings the requirement for military downsizing and requires a different approach to foreign policy.²

Traditionally, the US have been able to use both carrot and stick, threats, coercion and sometimes have even resorted to the unilateral use of force. Now, the rise of other players, combined with economic restraint, requires more consulting, more considerations, and the forming of partnerships in a much more multilateral approach.³ The diverse instruments of policy: diplomatic, information, military and economic (DIME) need to be handled differently. Responding to the growing world instability, President Obama and his administration emphasized a key factor in their strategic papers - Partnership.⁴ One of the most complex and unstable area is the modern Middle East filled with serious threats.

The Middle East has been, and remains, a battle ground for numerous conflicts over borders, regimes, ideologies and more (for recent history of the Middle East see [Appendix B](#)). President Obama, addressing the conflicts in the modern Middle East, proposed that: "these

objectives are best achieved when we partner with the international community and with the countries and peoples of the region.”⁵ Although some of the modern Middle East countries are well equipped with state of the art western military forces, they look at the US to “do something”, while, at the same time, are suspicious of US motives and interests.⁶

The essay will begin by examining the need for a US led Middle Eastern alliance from the US perspective, current status and grand strategy, followed by an evaluation of key advantages and disadvantages such an alliance might have to the US. It will then proceed reviewing the potential partners of such an alliance, and their need. Finally it will explore the possible implementation of NATO model to METO by reviewing NATO and suggesting some applications.

Thesis

This paper proposes building a Middle Eastern alliance to confront some of these issues and threats. The alliance should be US led, with as much resemblance to NATO as possible. This “Middle Eastern Treaty Organization” (METO) would also have to be somewhat different due to its potential partners, widely differently cultures and regimes.

United States - Current Position, Strategy and the Need For METO

US Position as a World Leader

The United States is facing a challenging era. Its current position as a political, economic and military world leader is strong, but far from unchallenged. Since the end of the Cold War following WWII the US became the only super power in the world. Since then, for different reasons, it has waged wars in various countries. 9/11 was a turning point with a steep growth in

active military operations.⁷ Nowadays, the US military is spread across many countries, and is engaged in combat daily. Although the Obama administration withdrew the majority of US soldiers from Iraq, the emerging situation with ISIS required extended use of force in Iraq and Syria.⁸ US military is over-extended; moreover, US domestic opinion has been war weary for quite some time. As former Secretary of State, Gates, noted: “increasingly impatient and war-weary American people”.⁹

Economically, the challenges continue. China has just overtaken the US as the largest economy in the world (although China is still far behind on GDP per capita).¹⁰ In addition, US debt is now over \$18 Trillion.¹¹ These are potential strategic threats to America as debt interest continues to rise. One of the methods to deal with such a deficit is by downsizing the military, including reduction in personnel, armaments, contracts, facilities and more.¹² So, how can the US keep its global position as world leader, influencing decisions, promoting values, when a huge part of that was done by utilizing its military for peace as well as violent operations? Using its hard power to support its soft power? It most definitely requires a strategy!

US Strategy

“No one nation can meet the challenges of the 21st century on its own, nor dictate its terms to the world”, noted President Obama as he proclaimed the need to build partnerships and alliances.¹³ The Obama National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2010 as well as 2015 extends this idea of building partnerships by relying on existing institutions and alliances such as NATO. The emphasis over these institutions goes beyond security and peace keeping, but also includes advancing prosperity, promoting values, burden sharing and basic cooperation. The strategy also directs the building of “new spheres of cooperation.”¹⁴ The uses of existing institutions and

organizations combined with these new spheres are key factors. “It means building upon our traditional alliances, while also cultivating partnerships with new centers of influence. Taken together, these approaches will allow us to foster more effective global cooperation to confront challenges that know no borders and affect every nation.”¹⁵ Moreover, “regional organizations can be particularly effective at mobilizing and legitimating cooperation among countries closest to the problem.”¹⁶ General Dempsey also emphasizes partnerships: “Achieving our national military objectives also requires that we develop and evolve our relationships with our interagency and international partners.”¹⁷ Thus, in addition to the existing partnerships, it is clear that the US should consider some form of METO. The remainder of the paper considers the major opportunities and risks involved with creating a METO.

US Advantages and Disadvantages

There are numerous advantages of having such a METO alliance, spread across many different areas. Having such an institution - another big, international co-operative organization in addition to NATO - increases American global power immensely. That power enables US to have better influence in the specific Middle Eastern region and in the whole world.

Militarily, a METO would form a long-term alliance, bringing air, ground and naval capabilities to an area greatly in need for such a force. ISIS and other non-state terror organizations undermine Middle Eastern stability now and in the future. The partners of such an alliance could fight a battle against ISIS, or its equivalent, but also could confront future crises rising from either state (Iran for example) or non-state threats; much like NATO currently does in Europe and elsewhere. In an ideal world such alliance would have the time needed in order to build its structure and organizations, time for training and integration, several iterations of

exercises, debriefs and improvement – all of those before operational engagement. Lack of resources (especially money and personnel) and imminent urgent threats are likely to change this timeline.

The US-led alliance would work together creating a structure that would enable it to fight a fully coordinated air, ground, and sea campaign. The alliance's main purpose is to overcome current obstacles and at the same time prepare for the next crisis. This is a very different approach to the current one being fought against ISIS, where an ad-hoc coalition has been forged, with minimum integration, fragile trust and lack of long-term objectives.¹⁸ A fully integrated military force will take longer to achieve. There is a need for time to train, build the framework and obviously build trust among the participants. Such military force could later possibly extend its reach, to other parts of the region, possibly even beyond the borders mentioned earlier. Such an alliance could also easily form joint coalitions for ad-hoc instances, where the use of the METO alliance may not be necessary or possible. The structure, the training and the trust, would already exist (much like the use of NATO). Such alliance would also reduce potential American casualties, which is crucial to the war effort and to American political and domestic support.

Diplomatically, a METO alliance would create partnership, promote cooperation and build trust. Having an organization communicating day to day, training together and fighting side by side, would bring the people (and their countries) closer. Getting to know one another can remove barriers placed a long time ago by fear and lack of trust. The strong military leadership that exists in many of the Middle Eastern countries will help persuading its government and its people that such relationship with the United States is important to their interests.

Another important diplomatic advantage of having such Middle Eastern alliance is that it would cement the presence of US in that important and enormous area; it would therefore discard other global actors with aspiration to gain power (politically, diplomatically, militarily, economically, culturally or else) to access the territory.¹⁹ Different players with different interests and agenda are always considered as potential threat. By forming a METO alliance such risk becomes considerably lower.

METO would also provide a great opportunity to promote America's values. Currently, most countries in the region are not democratic and have very different cultural views about issues such as liberty, human rights and women role in the society. METO partnership with its structure and organization can be a wonderful platform to promote values and ideas such as peace and democracy (it will obviously take time but it is the right direction). NATO research paper on the subject claims that NATO "contributed to the process and the final end of democracy building".²⁰ It continues to talk about contribution to the development of some "fundamental conditions for a democratic security community to emerge: (1) the establishment of institutions of liberal democracy (formal democratic institutions and procedures, rule of law, respect of fundamental freedoms and rights); (2) The diffusions of norms and values of liberal democracy; and (3) They created the conditions for the development of many-sided and direct relations amongst states and societies."²¹ Such "diffusion of norms" together with NATO's policies and practices contributed to the "spread of liberal-democratic norms."²² NATO's research paper focuses a great deal on the social elites (military and political). It stresses their importance and emphasizes the learning process they require. It states that NATO's "social learning amongst the local elites ... produced institutional adaptation."²³ METO would have to influence leaderships and elites from the Arab culture, a much different culture from those in

Europe; these elites may, in some countries, possibly even feel resent to democratic norms or American values. However, over time, the values of the institution and its processes would likely diffuse and these elites slowly adopt the values to which they may, at first, object. Finally, METO has a good prospect of reducing the possibility of war, where the potential belligerent would chose diplomacy over combat when confronted with such an effective alliance.

Economically, President Obama has emphasized the importance of a strong US economy in many occasions calling it “the foundation of our strength in the world.”²⁴ METO potentially generates more burden sharing. Most of the states involved in the region have their own military capabilities so there should be little need for American forces (especially ground troops which bring the real problematic issue for the US). Taking some of the load off the American economy would enable a downsizing of the US military without dropping national security, or taking under risk against potential threats. Building such partnerships would also create a fertile ground for Foreign Military Sales (FMS) transactions and other potential economic opportunities that are not possible currently due to bad relationships or other restrictions. FMS would also help the private sector through the military industry, but as a second or third order effect, other civilian sectors once the relationship with these countries becomes more open, relaxed and trusted.

Finally, the last major opportunity and advantage brought by a METO alliance would be increased peace and stability in the region. As seen in NATO, an alliance helps the stability and thus promotes peace. Stability is very rare in the Middle East and peace is a long-term aspiration.²⁵ Building the trust between member countries (whether METO includes Israel or not) through the organization, bureaucracy and training, and by providing the platform (if required, under a US umbrella) for conversation, sharing of ideas and debate, on neutral ground, could be exactly the solution the region needs for a cooperative peace and stability effort. This

would mirror such initiatives to the IF program at AWC or the ACSC in the Air University at Maxwell AFB.²⁶

Risks - The main risk that needs to be considered when forming such an innovative alliance is centered on the very **nature of its partner states**. Most of them are **not democratic**. The behavior of non-democratic states differs from that of democracies; they are less affected by domestic opinion, the state usually control's the media, and many have a tendency towards corruption and nepotism. However, they too aspire for stability and so should not be dismissed.²⁷ Having another regional platform for negotiations might help resolve conflict prior to them becoming violent; should a disagreement occur it will be dealt in the organization of the alliance, as it does in NATO. Frank R. Douglas further acknowledges disputes inside NATO writing that "Disagreement within the alliance is nothing new.... Now there are potentially many combinations of "coalitions of the willing". This new NATO endorsement for the idea of separable but not separate supports the new US strategy of Forward Presence."²⁸ Peter Duignan also refers to that subject: "Some NATO allies may choose not to join a military response or even man a peacekeeping force."²⁹ Therefore, a METO disagreement should not be different then a NATO one.

Another risk comes from creating a **mainly Arabic alliance** is the so-called "Arab Way of War". In his masterpiece "Arabs at War" Kenneth Pollack analyses military effectiveness throughout the years 1948-1991. "Since 1945 the Arab states have experienced problems that have denied their armed forces the success on the battlefield... The source of this problem is often referred to as the "human factor" or military effectiveness."³⁰ Pollack examines several categories and comes to a conclusion that amongst the categories he studied, "four areas of military effectiveness stand out as consistent and crippling problems for Arab forces": (1)

Tactical Leadership; (2) Information Management; (3) Weapons Handling and (4) Maintenance.³¹ Very similar conclusions appear in Norvell B DeAtkine's more controversial essays "Why Arab Lose Wars" and "The Arabs as Insurgent". DeAtkine emphasis culture as the root cause for a long and unimpressive record of Arab military performances since 1960. He reinforces Pollack reasons in his research and adds: Training³²; Leadership; Predictability and Conformity.³³ Such group of problems is not easily overcome. Nevertheless, by crafting the alliance carefully it is not insurmountable.

The US would lead this alliance by providing equipment and taking full responsibility for key parts of the alliance. The US should do so in a subtle, sensitive way, in order to prevent the rise of public opposition in the Arab member countries. The key areas for US leadership would be: command and control; information management (intelligence - gathering and analysis); and training. The US would thus strengthen the alliance in its weak spots and in return would benefit from a controlling influence in the region. Having more American influence is beneficial to the US of course, but also supports preventing the alliance going astray. Having the United States directing the heart of the alliance infrastructure prevents it from conducting a military operation without US approval. This would thus resolve the last major risk of forming the METO alliance – the potential that, with majority of Arab non-democratic countries amongst its members – it would attack, pre-emptively, non-Arab nation in the region (especially the long standing US ally, Israel).

Middle East Interests - motivation to join METO

The first and foremost reason for a Middle Eastern country in joining METO is **security**. "Balance against threats" is the most common motive for alignment.³⁴ The regime or

government must protect their national sovereignty. Protecting the state through a military alliance, with multiple forces, led by the world superpower is an important guarantee in a restless, sometimes chaotic environment such as the Middle East. To the weak countries it brings military capabilities beyond their individual reach. To the stronger countries, it brings extra capabilities and increased numbers. The combining of forces in such an alliance - air, sea and ground forces, as well as command and control, technology, and intelligence capabilities – would provide a force well superior to any regional actor. Such a force could then operate against a range of enemies, ranging from terror activity and insurgency to a full-scale conventional war. The US contribution to the alliance may also include extending its protective nuclear umbrella to other members of the alliance, thus maybe also reduce Middle Eastern countries desire to proliferate nuclear weapons.

Besides a common threat of a radical ideology and terror organizations (such as ISIS today), the interests for a METO alliance are diverse. **Peace, prosperity and stability** are probably also key aspirations in the majority of the countries. A regime always wishes to stay in power and thus promotes stability. The more open and westernized regimes will also promote prosperity. With regard to peace, I believe it is an even higher wish and one where trust is needed to be constructed before full implementation of the phrase. **Economic** benefits are also an important part of the objectives of a METO ally, taking advantage of good military relations to achieve other needs. Some countries would like the **International recognition**, while others are just bandwagoning because of their size and/or power. Having a US led METO will keep the global world leader in the region, thus protecting the interests of its countries. As a second and third order effect, America is likely to invest more money in the countries' economy and in their military; it will probably provide better infrastructure (military bases, runways, etc.), and it will

thus make the METO partners more influential in the international arena. From big to small, weak to strong, being a METO partner is extremely beneficial.

NATO – Definition & Purpose, Structure and The Application into METO

What Is NATO?

Before deciding to be somewhat “like NATO” it is important to understand what NATO is. NATO has changed and evolved since 1949, not only expanding from its 12 original countries to 28, but NATO has also changed in structure, missions, operations and more. Brian J Collins examines the question and recognizes that “NATO is a complex international organization, and the answer to the question what is NATO depends on both the context of the question and your understanding of NATO.”³⁵ NATO’s purpose is no longer “to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down”, a phrase attributed to Lord Ismay, NATO’s 1st Secretary General.³⁶

The US Department of State tries to answer the question, adding some background (underlined sentences reflect areas where I believe to have common ground with METO): “Formed in 1949 with the signing of the Washington Treaty, NATO is a security alliance of 28 countries from North America and Europe. NATO’s fundamental goal is to safeguard the Allies’ freedom and security by political and military means. NATO remains the principal security instrument of the transatlantic community and expression of its common democratic values. It is the practical means through which the security of North America and Europe are permanently tied together. NATO enlargement has furthered the U.S. goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty -- that an attack against one Ally is an attack against all -- is at the core of the Alliance, a promise of collective defense. Article 4 of the treaty ensures

consultations among Allies on security matters of common interest, which have expanded from a narrowly defined Soviet threat to the critical mission in Afghanistan, as well as peacekeeping in Kosovo and new threats to security such as cyber-attacks, and global threats such as terrorism and piracy that affect the Alliance and its global network of partners. In addition to its traditional role in the territorial defense of Allied nations, NATO leads the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and has ongoing missions in the Balkans and the Mediterranean; it also conducts extensive training exercises and offers security support to partners around the globe, including the European Union in particular but also the United Nations and the African Union.”³⁷ NATO website provides an intuitive and graphic answer to the question “WHAT IS NATO?”³⁸ It talks about a political and military alliance that its “essential purpose is to safeguard the freedom and the security of its members” (for more in-depth information see [Appendix C](#)).

As seen, many areas of similarities can be applicable to METO: ideology, objectives, cooperation and more. Collins, after considering some definitions such as: “collective defense”; “alliance of democracies”; and “prototypical security community” concludes in his aftermath: “NATO is an evolving collective security organization, whose identity is shaped by its members and through their interactions.”³⁹ After briefly examining the history and understanding the definitions, it is time to comprehend NATO’s main structure and more importantly, key features that enabled it to work and becoming “the most successful alliance system in the history of the world.”⁴⁰

NATO organizational structure is complex with both civilian structure, military structure and other organizations and agencies.⁴¹ NATO is a highly bureaucratic and yet extremely capable political and military organization (see [Appendix D](#)).

Implementation of NATO model to METO

NATO alliance at its core was an alliance formed to face a common threat. Article V in particularly acknowledges the commitment to one another.⁴² I have discussed earlier the need to make compromises due to the nature of the mainly Arab, non-democratic states occupying the larger Middle East area. The METO alliance can implement structure and even processes. Nevertheless, the basic lack of trust will not allow it to have the exact same treaty. Patricia A. Weitsman identified a range of six commitment levels that alliances may provide: “(1) a promise to maintain benevolent neutrality in the event of war; (2) a promise to consult in the event of military hostilities with an implication of aid; (3) promises of military assistance and other aid in event of war but without prepared or explicit conditions specified in advance; (4) a promise to come to the active assistance of an ally under specific circumstances; (5) an unconditional promise of mutual assistance, short of joint planning, with division of forces; and (6) an unconditional promise of mutual assistance in the event of attack with preplanned command and control and the integration of force and strategy.”⁴³

Alliances were formed earlier in times without article V. METO can initially adopt a more moderate strategy that enables a wide common interest in order to maximize its partners. Somewhere near Weitsman’s second type of alliance only with already existing infrastructure, processes and mutual training. That will establish a wonderful platform allowing the alliance to evolve into a more committed alliance after trust is achieved. A narrower alliance would probably be possible also with Weitsman’s third or fourth type as well. Having such alliance is also a great platform to conduct a military operation joined by some of METO members without mobilizing METO forces due to consensus problems (as it happens in NATO). The US will have its legitimacy and regional forces applying the violence, thus keeping US power and influence

while reducing American involvement, American casualties and American budget. An aspiration to reach Weitsman's last level of commitment (similar to NATO's article 5) is important so no member would assume it can take more risks, provoking or even attacking a rival, assuming METO will ultimately protect it, as happened in World War I.⁴⁴

The current ideological threat to the region is from terror organizations such as ISIS. While many believe the expansion of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is a relative small issue, others believe it has a potential to be "more extensive and fraught with danger than the war on terror."⁴⁵ The latest Congressional Research Service (CRS, 8 Jan, 2015) states that the Islamic State threatens Syria and Iraq and "potentially several other countries in the region" and also "considered a direct threat to US interests in the Middle East."⁴⁶ President Obama has formed an ad-hoc coalition with western countries as well as regional countries, conducting air attacks. It is clear then, that the ideologists' extremist in the Middle East form a threat. Another current obstacle to the stability of the region comes from Shi'a Iran, where a majority of METO potential member states are Sunni, sharing worries with the US and Israel as well. While ISIS and its equivalent are ideological terrorist organizations, Iran is a state, and a potential METO member should it change its current policy after evaluating the advantages of being a METO member to its interests.

However, even without such threats METO is relevant and supports regional interests. Much like the case with NATO, Collins states that "the NATO alliance is not based on expediency or a common enemy as its primary justification, but based on shared values that have gradually deepened and created a security community with long-standing inter-Alliance cooperation."⁴⁷ Duignan emphasizes the outdated role of the Soviet Union threat as the reason for the alliance and discusses extensively about NATO role in the future claiming that "The primary functions of

NATO today and tomorrow are peacekeeping, crisis management, conflict resolution, and encouraging cooperation among the community of states that make up the European continent.”⁴⁸ This is exactly what METO should do within its region.

As for METO’s structure and institutions, the alliance can copy NATO’s basic structure, starting with simple but crucial organization and moving up from there as time goes by. Decision making and processes can be taught and trained. Simple theoretic exercises should be done and rehearsed; leaders and instructors should participate and graduate from a joint training program, all before commencing mutual training. In an ideal world, all forces should have the time, money and space to prepare and train. However, since there is never enough time nor money, I would suggest METO start by focusing on the air component. Air power is a major player in recent NATO or US led operations. It is the easiest force to use without entering with ground forces into the country, leaving a large and perhaps long-lasting ground force presence. And, it can be done from the participant country home base. The Air Force has another advantage for many of the countries already send their pilots to the US for basic or advanced training, flying on US built aircrafts. Conducting air operations first will enable the alliance to enter gradually to the phases of ground and sea with less pressure to show immediate results, for a usually much larger force like the countries Army. “Air Force first” concept will allow METO to be effective relatively fast. It will pave the road with standards and relationships for the other forces. The Army, Navy or Marines in the respective countries would enjoy the patience needed to enter the alliance, train and get prepared in order to be able to engage air land or sea operations for which the alliance was formed.

Conclusion

History is full of surprises, and alliance history is no different. NATO was founded to oppose a Soviet threat. The threat is long gone but NATO is still extremely relevant and influential.⁴⁹ Having another effective alliance in a different part of the world is meaningful. Implementing such endeavor with the US leading the institution and the US controlling the heart of the military organization (in order to make up for the alliance partners inefficiencies) can be exactly what America needs right now. The economic problems, the downsizing of the military, the declined diplomatic power and the exhaustion from wars, can all have a turning point. Leading a Middle Eastern alliance will reduce the required military budget (in the long run) and assist financially across sectors. The alliance could wage the wars with regional actors and troops, instead of the US. It will reduce American casualties. METO will put the US in its strongest political, diplomatic position it had ever been in. alliances in four continents is powerful. Such alliance would no doubt promote American values of Peace and prosperity, but also stability in a place where it is scarce. The regional countries can also profit from taking part in a METO alliance. Whether it is economically, diplomatically, militarily or even bandwagoning, being allied with the world super power is a good enough reason. It can also bring peace, stability, prosperity and a regional platform to resolve conflicts – diplomatically.⁵⁰ This could be a breakthrough in the entire area's relationships amongst themselves and with the international community. NATO model is a good model for that and it can be implemented with a basic structure, basic decision making processes and ideology. There are of course many questions with need for an answer (which countries will be members of METO? What degree of mutual security will it hold? etc.) and many risks needs to be addressed (How will other key players in the world react? Especially Russia and China; how will the Sunni-Shi'a-Christian- (and maybe Jewish)- relationship works?

etc.). However, when it seems that threats multiply, instability rises and great powers decline – it is time for hope! Maybe, as oppose to the words of John Lennon, we don't need to imagine there's no countries and no religion too in order to have nothing to kill or die for. Then we could really “imagine all the people living life in peace”.



Appendix A: Countries of the modern Middle East

In this essay use Dr. Sorenson's partition of the countries in the modern Middle East to include countries of the Persian Gulf, the eastern Mediterranean countries, and North Africa: ⁵¹

Persian Gulf	Eastern Mediterranean	North Africa
Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Tunisia
Bahrain	Turkey	Libya
Kuwait	Syria	Morocco
Qatar	Lebanon	Algeria
United Arab Emirates	Israel	
Oman	Jordan	
Yemen		
Iran		
Iraq		

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Appendix B: Middle East brief recent history

It is impossible to understand the need for an alliance in the Middle East or the risks involved in forming such alliance without examining some background. The Middle East history goes back thousands of years. And although it is important to understand it, to recognize different cultures and behaviors due to the scope of the essay I will focus briefly on the recent history. Since around 1500 AD until the end of WWI the Ottoman Empire ruled the area spreading Islam while being relatively tolerant to other religions.⁵² After WWI and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, European colonialism brought European rule to the region.⁵³ The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 divided the Ottoman Empire between the European super-powers at the time – France and Great Britain, deciding the borders of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Southern Turkey.⁵⁴ From 1922 to 1971 UK and France issued independence to the majority of the Middle Eastern countries in a decolonization process.⁵⁵ The foundation of the state of Israel (1947) occurred at that same time and has changed after several wars and crucial peace treaties.⁵⁶ The “Arab Spring” dramatically changed much of the Arab world, and especially the situation in Libya, Iraq and Syria. So, it is clear that the countries are relatively young as independent countries (45-95 years old). The majority are dictatorships/authoritarian regimes with their citizens being either “Partly Free” or “Not Free” (Israel is the only full democracy).⁵⁷ And the military status within the society is relatively strong because of both culture and necessity (with compare to western countries). The countries in the region had fought many wars and formed various alliances, most of these alliances failed to unify the Arab forces.⁵⁸ And they are now confronting a new ideological threat by the nature of ISIS and similar terror organization. METO potential partners are equipped with modernized, western, US made military. Most of them are

able to take care of themselves. Obviously, they can contribute a meaningful air, ground and sea force to an alliance.

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Appendix C: NATO definition for “What Is NATO”

NATO website provides an intuitive and graphic answer to the question “WHAT IS NATO?”⁵⁹ (underlined sentences reflect areas where I believe to have common ground with METO), It talks about a political and military alliance that its “essential purpose is to safeguard the freedom and the security of its members” It further elaborates and clarifies the terms political and military:

- **POLITICAL** - NATO promotes democratic values and encourages consultation and cooperation on defence and security issues to build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.
- **MILITARY** - NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty - NATO’s founding treaty - or under a UN mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organizations

Many areas of common ground between METO potential member countries; and a resemblance to NATO.

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Appendix D: NATO Organizational Structure

NATO organization is complex with both civilian structure, military structure and other organizations and agencies.⁶⁰ The important working structure features the North Atlantic Council (NAC) – the political decision-making body, alongside with its groups and committees; the Military structure with its committees; and the Secretary General who is NATO's top international civil servant (for more details see Appendix x).⁶¹ NATO is a highly bureaucratic and yet extremely capable political and military organization. All state partners have a seat at the table and participate in the committees. The Secretary General is selected for a period of four years after a consensus regarding the person, is reached between the countries. NATO's military force is voluntarily. Each country decides if and how much equipment or how many people it is willing to provide. As to the working process "NATO had to create a working organizational structure, a decision making process and a defense planning process before NATO could actually act in any meaningful way... NATO's basic organizational structure, its reliance on consensus decision making, its methods of defense planning, and the accompanying traditions have remained remarkably constant at the macro level. These processes have in turn shaped NATO's evolution."⁶²

The important working structure

- The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the principal political decision-making body at NATO. Each member country has a seat at the NAC.

It meets at least once a week or whenever the need arises, at different levels. It is chaired by the Secretary General who helps members reach agreement on key issues.

- o The Nuclear Planning Group has the same authority as the NAC with regard to nuclear policy issues

- Subordinate committees: NATO has a network of committees to deal with all subjects on its agenda, from political to more technical issues, therefore bringing national representatives and experts from all NATO member countries together on a regular basis.
- Military organization and structure:
 - The Military Committee: composed of the Chiefs of Defense of NATO member countries.
 - The International Military Staff: the Military Committee's executive body.
 - The military command structure: composed of Allied Command Operations and Allied Command Transformation.

NATO has very few permanent forces of its own. When an operation is agreed by the NAC, members contribute forces on a voluntary basis. These forces return to their countries once the mission is completed.

- The Secretary General: the Alliance's top international civil servant. This person is responsible for steering the process of consultation and decision-making within the Alliance and ensuring that decisions are implemented. The Secretary General is also NATO's chief spokesperson and heads the Organization's International Staff, which provides advice, guidance and administrative support to the national delegations at NATO HQs

Notes

¹ David S. Sorenson, *An Introduction to the Modern Middle East: history, religion, political economy, politics* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2014), xi.

² Stephen S. Cohen; J. Bradford DeLong. *The end of influence: what happens when other countries have the money* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 143-148.

³ Stephen S. Cohen; J. Bradford DeLong. *The end of influence: what happens when other countries have the money* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 19, 143-148.

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